

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 28, 2016

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service welcomes comments on Endangered Species Act permit for future oil and gas activities in OH, PA, WV

Information meetings and webinar to be held mid-December

A coalition of nine oil and gas companies will be requesting an incidental take permit to cover effects to five bat species from their oil and gas exploration, production and maintenance activities in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is inviting public input as we begin an environmental review process to determine the potential impacts of issuing a permit for these activities.

The coalition is developing a habitat conservation plan to avoid, minimize and offset (mitigate) for effects to the declining bat species. The Service will develop an environmental impact statement before making a decision on whether the agency can issue the permit.

Individuals may submit comments and materials through December 27, 2016. During the 30-day public comment period, public meetings will be held from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. local time at the following locations:

- **December 12 – Houston, Pennsylvania.** Chartiers Township Community Center
- **December 13 - Cambridge, Ohio.** Southgate Hotel
- **December 14 – Charleston, West Virginia.** Beni Kedem Temple (Shriners Temple)
- **December 15 - Clarksburg, West Virginia.** Village Square Conference Center
- **December 16 - Williamsport, Pennsylvania.** Genetti Hotel

The first hour of each meeting will be an informal open house, followed by a brief presentation from approximately 6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. After the presentation, the informal open house will resume.

The Service also will host an online public meeting (webinar) on December 20 at 6 p.m.

For the Federal Register notice, frequently asked questions, and more information on the scoping meetings and the webinar, go to <https://www.fws.gov/northeast/ecologicalservices/hcp/oghcp.html>

The coalition includes nine companies that individually conduct oil and gas activities in the three states: Antero Resources Corporation; Ascent Resources, LLC; Chesapeake Energy Corporation; EnLink Midstream L.P.; EQT Corporation; MarkWest Energy Partners, L.P., MPLX L.P., and Marathon Petroleum Corporation; Rice Energy, Inc., Southwestern Energy Company; and The Williams Companies, Inc.

The conservation plan will address incidental take of the endangered Indiana bat, the threatened northern long-eared bat, the little brown bat, eastern small-footed bat, and tri-colored bat. Habitat conservation plans are agreements between a private landowner or a non-federal company or group and the Service, allowing permit applicants to undertake otherwise lawful activities on their property that may result in the incidental death, injury or harassment of covered species; the applicant agrees to conservation measures designed to minimize and mitigate the impact of those actions.

Comments may be submitted by any of the following methods:

U.S. Mail: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R5-ES-2016-0135, Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 5275 Leesburg Pike, ABHC-PPM; Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

Electronically:

Visit the Federal eRulemaking Portal: www.regulations.gov. In the search box enter (Docket Number FWS-R5-ES-2016-0135).

Additional opportunities for public comment during development of the environmental impact statement will be provided when the draft statement is released for public comment, which is anticipated for late 2017.